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WOMEN'S COLLEGES FACING MOST IMPORTANT DUTY

Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve of Barnard Tells How to Meet It

Attraction of Business, Professional, Scientific and Political Careers for Women Makes Arduous Work for Faculties and Entails Greatest Care in Fixing Curricula

Miss Virginia C. Gildersleeve, dean of Barnard College, who expresses the woman's viewpoint on the question "What is the matter with the colleges?" and offers many important constructive suggestions.

Problem Has International Aspect, Educator Points Out, as Her Sex Almost Everywhere Meets Competition of Men and Society Demands Best Work From All

NOW that the college terms are in full swing increasing interest is being shown in the series of educational articles being presented to readers of The New York Herald Magazine. The countrywide publicity given the results of Thomas A. Edison's famous questionnaire started the inquiry "What is the matter with the colleges?" although Mr. Edison himself maintained that the fault lay with the elementary school system. Then followed the scathing arraignment of our educational system by Dean West of Princeton. He pointed out that practically half the people in the United States were illiterate and gave figures to prove it.

Dean Jones of Yale told in another Herald interview why the great New Haven educational institution had abandoned elective studies. Dr. Henry N. MacCracken, head of Vassar College, explained to a Herald reporter why he thought the women's colleges were far in advance of men's colleges. Followed Dean Hawkes of Columbia, who expressed decided ideas on the value of activities in the colleges outside the set curriculum.

To-day Miss Virginia C. Gildersleeve, dean of Barnard College gives the woman educator's viewpoint of the question. She offers many important constructive suggestions. A recent trip to Europe, where Miss Gildersleeve met the leading educators of the world, makes her interview to-day of international importance.

By REGINALD A. WILSON.

THE growing attraction of a business, professional, scientific or political career for the graduates of American women's colleges has emphasized a growing and important duty that has devolved upon the faculties of these institutions. It is, according to Dean Virginia C. Gildersleeve of Barnard College, that of inducing women not under economic pressure to enter activities where the remuneration may be small in proportion to the time spent or the results to be achieved.

This does not mean that the more remunerative and less arduous places are to be reserved for the women entirely dependent upon their own earning power, or that attractive positions in business or the professions are to be served out as doles. Dean Gildersleeve holds that the community demands and is entitled to the best from its members; that positions should be filled by those best equipped to fill them. But it does mean that the educational work at women's colleges is entering upon a new era where the higher education of a growing proportion of the undergraduate body is no longer only an incidental factor in the academic programme.

The decision of many women, most marked since the war, to enter the fields of medicine, law, politics, science, journalism, &c., has compelled a readjustment of study courses, a reassortment of groupings and the exploration of new ideas in the curricula of women's colleges. It has added a new and international aspect to the problem of higher education for women which will result, Dean Gildersleeve believes, through the influence of the International Federation of University Women, in a steadily growing generosity on the part of American institutions in the matter of scholarships for European students visiting America; and, on the other hand, the creation of better facilities for American students abroad.

Standing at Nation's Gateway, Barnard Surveys Educational Field

Dean Gildersleeve, who recently returned from Europe, where the latter phase of this subject came under her especial observation in England, France and Italy, contributes to-day to THE NEW YORK HERALD'S series of discussions on educational reform. Miss Gildersleeve feels that Barnard College is destined to play an important part in the development of the newer and broader ideas in the education of women for two reasons: First, because of its connection with Columbia University, and the opportunity afforded thereby to encourage and direct the work along scientific lines and with unusual advantages to the students themselves; and, second, because Barnard is, so to speak, situated at the gateway to America, through which students from abroad enter, pause to survey the situation, then either cast their lot among the institutions of the East or pass on to knock at the portals of the colleges of the West or South.

On the topics of elective rather than prescribed subjects of study and of required courses in Latin, which have been discussed in recent articles in THE NEW YORK HERALD Magazine, Miss Gildersleeve aligns herself with the modernists in the educational field. While in no way discounting the value to the graduate of a comprehensive knowledge of the classical languages, she is of the opinion that the time required to obtain such a knowledge is out of proportion to the practical benefits derived in the average case.

"A knowledge of Latin is of course exceedingly helpful," said Miss Gildersleeve, "but it is no longer prescribed at Barnard. Instead, however, we require an acquaintance with the history, thought and civilization of classical times—a knowledge that one might acquire, for example, from a study of Greek literature in translation.

"In this direction I believe Barnard is something of a pioneer, but I have found that other colleges here and abroad are adopting the same principles. There was a time when the theory was universally held that a classical education rested fundamentally upon a knowledge of Latin. Most certainly the student who has that background has the advantage over the one who has not. But the opinion is growing, and I heard it expressed recently in addresses delivered before the Congress of Universities of the British Empire in Oxford, where the necessity was emphasized of bringing students into contact with the civilization, thought and literature of classical times rather than stopping with a detailed knowledge of the dead languages alone."

How Barnard Handles Elective Study Problem

Barnard College, Miss Gildersleeve points out, has met the problem of elective rather than prescribed studies through a flexible grouping of related subjects. The object is to guide the student's development, to control it without the apparent exercise of control, to see to it that the student's research work is neither too narrow nor too scattered. Some good reason would have to be shown before a student would be permitted to confine her work to such unrelated subjects as, for instance, music, Spanish and anthropology.

Reverting to a discussion of the development of new educational ideas as a result of the tendency of college women to enter business and the professions Miss Gildersleeve gave proof that such tendency was very real and provided in itself still another problem for the women's colleges to solve. It is the problem of women teachers. While a few years ago the women's colleges of the country joined in a cooperative movement designed to point out the attractions and possibilities of business and professional careers for women, the underlying purpose thereof was to head off great numbers of graduates unfitted temperamentally, or otherwise, from entering the crowded and unremunerative teaching field. The movement outgrew itself, until to-day, according to the dean of Barnard, those same colleges are engaged in an effort to remind young women graduates not to overlook the interesting and attractive work that offers in the teaching field. The field of instructional work in the higher education of women is one therefore to which the attention of women graduates, not under economic pressure, must be directed by their faculties, in the opinion of Miss Gildersleeve, if the supply of qualified teachers is to keep pace with the student enrolment.

The increasing number of women seeking admission to the professional schools of Columbia University has led the authorities at Barnard in search of a sound process for the development of educational facilities along these lines.

"We are trying," said Dean Gildersleeve, "more closely to articulate the work of the graduate and professional schools, and we have developed a plan under which students in their senior year at Barnard may enter certain of the professional schools at Columbia—and sometimes elsewhere—and their first year's work there count for their Barnard degree."

By way of explanation it should be pointed out that the Barnard undergraduates who declare their intention of later entering the professional schools of political science, architecture, business, journalism, medicine, music, education, &c., are divided into two classes: those who leave Barnard at the end of the sophomore year, without candidacy for the bachelor of arts degree and those, who at the end of the junior year wish to take advantage of the combined course, counting the first year of an approved professional school in place of the senior year at Barnard. Students of the last named class who meet the necessary requirements may, on satisfactory completion of the first year in the professional school, become candidates for the bachelor of arts degree.

"I believe that temperamentally most women," continued Dean Gildersleeve, "incline to prefer the professions that tend to conserve or develop life. That is why a larger number entering the professional schools after their collegiate course select the schools of medicine, social work, politics or teaching rather than law or architecture. I believe it will always be that way. Business careers of course attract an increasingly large number."

Miss Gildersleeve was asked regarding the argument frequently heard in recent years that the woman who worked, although not of necessity, was an economic burden in that she closed some source of income to her sister who was financially dependent upon her own efforts. Her answer was as expressed before that while remunerative positions cannot be regarded as doles reserved for the dependent element of the community, it should be regarded almost as a duty, in the higher fields of endeavor at least, for women economically independent to lend their talents in fields of scientific research, politics, social work or other activities where the monetary reward may be small but the opportunity for service incalculable. "One great advantage from woman suffrage," Miss Gildersleeve added, "should be the increased opportunity for the practical application of this principle."

It is in the articulation of the professional and collegiate study courses and the careful pointing of students' careers along lines from which they may be expected to achieve the most good for themselves and the community of which they are a part that, in the opinion of Miss Gildersleeve, the women's colleges of the country have their greatest work.

Concerning the various professional fields mentioned in which women are playing a more and more important part and the opportunities afforded Dean Gildersleeve referred to the official bulletin of Barnard College for 1921-1922. In the field of social work the bulletin announces:

> "Exceptional advantages are available for students desiring to specialize in economics, sociology and social economy in preparation for social and philanthropic work. Besides the courses given at Barnard in economics and social science, certain graduate courses in this department of Columbia University are open, with the consent of the department and of the committee on instruction, to specially qualified seniors. Through an arrangement with the New York School of Social Work certain courses in the latter institution may also be pursued . . . by specially qualified seniors and counted toward the Barnard degree. The purpose of this school is to fit men and women for social service in either professional or volunteer work."

Thus is the collegiate work of a student at Barnard inclined to enter the social service field shaped toward eventual entry into this professional department either at the end of the sophomore year or a year later, when the interruption to the collegiate work does not prevent the subsequent achievement of the degree of bachelor of arts. The opportunities are the same under the faculties of political science, philosophy and pure science, in the schools of architecture, business, journalism, medicine, education and music. In this development, which for obvious reasons has proceeded further in colleges that constitute an integral part of a great university, Miss Gildersleeve thinks Barnard is leading the way.

Columbia Law School May Open Door to Women

"The professional schools of Columbia University," she declares, "accord a greater measure of hospitality to the woman student than is the case elsewhere. I hope eventually to overcome existing prejudices and see the Law School of Columbia open to women. Harvard and Radcliffe have, I believe, some similar opportunity for greater articulation of graduate and professional work, but Harvard is, I think, less hospitable in its reception of the woman student and of course gives her no degree."

It is worthy of note in this connection that Columbia University, however modern in other respects, has not yet followed the lead of New York University, Yale, the University of California, the University of Chicago and others in opening its law school to women.

In the international aspect of educational reform, in so far as it applies to women's colleges, Miss Gildersleeve is taking a keen and active part. She is chairman of the committee on international relations of the American Association of University Women, which was organized in 1918 to cooperate with the Institute of International Education in the development of this phase of educational work. Numerous agencies, such as the American University Union in London and similar organizations in Paris and Rome, have been created to advise, facilitate and encourage exchanges of students and instructors between the colleges and universities of the old and new worlds. Miss Gildersleeve is particularly interested and is giving a not inconsiderable part of her time and attention to the working out of a satisfactory method of selecting American students for Oxford and in the acquirement of a home for American students in Paris.

The work of devising a plan for the selection of American women students for Oxford has been undertaken at the request of the Oxford authorities. At best the famous British university has accommodations for only about twenty-five American students, and that number of applications from one American college alone has not been uncommon during recent years.

In her relationships with European institutions Barnard College has come of late years to occupy an interesting position. Nearly all the women's colleges have been, it is true, very progressive and generous in the international field. Bryn Mawr, for example, has for many years supported a large number of fellowships for foreign students. Smith has been particularly interested in Spain, Wellesley in the Orient, Vassar in Czecho-Slovakia. But Barnard, at the eastern gateway of our country, has a chance to come in contact with many nationalities.

Practically all of the European students who come to attend the women's colleges of America arrive at New York. Many find a temporary home in Barnard's dormitories and advice and assistance from Barnard's faculty. Some pass on to the schools of New England, the South or the West. But their first and usually their last contact with American college life comes through the hospitality of Barnard. There is no comparable agency for the American student in Europe, and the establishment of a home for American college women and international headquarters in Paris, preliminary negotiations for which have already been completed, is, in the opinion of Miss Gildersleeve, one of the pressing needs of the time.

In America, as in Europe, the ideal education for women is one which avoids two evil views of life—evil, that is, because of their destructive work on character; these are the sentimental and the sordidly material views. Dean Gildersleeve was among the first of the educators who enthusiastically advocated an education that should fit a woman for pecuniary independence, but without subordinating the highest things of life. She belongs in the van of the thinkers who believe that educational methods are never finished, never perfect, but stand in need of constant revision.

With the dictum of a famous teacher of the Sorbonne to the effect that rhetoric as well as mathematics change with other changing things, especially in their study, most modern teachers now agree. Indeed, the older sciences—mathematics and physics, on which the new sciences depend it is now thought essential to restudy every year or so. Thus they will be kept fresh for the needs of the hour.

By keeping up to date, to use an ordinary expression which in this relation is not particularly descriptive, and always in touch with things of the day, the woman's college best exhibits its usefulness. Barnard has been among the first to do two things essential to real vitality in any college: she has kept her study groupings modern and she has stabilized them.

Draws From Every Land; Only Half Are Residents

The methods of Barnard have a wide influence, due partly to the enormous territory she draws on for matriculates. This territory is the entire country, with more than sprinklings from foreign lands. A few years ago the majority of Barnard students were residents of New York city, but the enrolment of the new session revealed that more than one-half of them come from out of town and nearly every corner of the Republic is represented.

A study of these methods explains the unprecedented recent enrolment which Barnard shares in common with other well known colleges for women. It has been so great, and, as it would seem, so unexpected, that economists are looking carefully at the figures to deduce facts from them. The true cause of this popularity of Barnard, however, is on the surface and has been already referred to as a general change in curricula, whereby education is becoming more and more vocational.

Barnard's effort, likely to be successful, to have Columbia open its law school to women is an attraction, while its advantages for acquiring a proficiency in accountancy, insurance, the study of advertising and marketing of products and in truth for getting workable knowledge of almost any department of business draw students. These changes have developed Barnard into a distinctively national institution.

One of the striking facts of this year's registration, Dean Gildersleeve pointed out, is the number of students who transferred from other colleges to Barnard, the increase in these transfers being 25 per cent. over last year.

In announcing the adoption of a new status of university undergraduates the general trend has been toward freedom without in any wise lowering standards.

"On the contrary, the object of this legislation," said the dean, "is to attract to Barnard, or to the status of university undergraduates, students of the very ablest sort, whether from other colleges or from schools. In the course of a few years this legislation and similar provisions which will from time to time be instituted should tend to raise the quality of Barnard students and the standard of its scholarship.

"It means the giving to Barnard of much freer access to really first-rate material, on which, as on the best instruction, the success of the college depends. It is very much to be hoped that Barnard will gradually attract from all parts of the world students of the ablest character, and that it will become cosmopolitan in type while continuing to be a thoroughly sound college for students who live in the vicinity."

Barnard thus has enlarged its curricula in a perceptible degree to include a good many features that border on the vocational, even while it has not branched out into schools of commerce, finance and the like. The changes in the teaching personnel and an enlarged programme of instruction are means to the same end.

But it is Dean Gildersleeve's firm belief that the emphasis placed on practical ideas will sweep classicism on in the tide. And the fact seems to be that the two systems of education are not antagonistic, but helpful. By either system there will be turned out more students with minds that are liberally enlarged.

DEAN GILDERSLEEVE'S CAREER AS AN EDUCATOR

DEAN VIRGINIA CROCHERON GILDERSLEEVE, daughter of Justice Henry Alger Gildersleeve, retired, is a product of the schools of New York city, where she was born in 1877, receiving her preparatory education in the Brearly School and her college training at Barnard, from which she received the degree of A. B. in 1899. A year later Miss Gildersleeve obtained from Columbia University the degree of A. M. and eight years later that of Ph. D. from the same institution. This honor was duplicated in 1916 by Rutgers College.

Miss Gildersleeve began her pedagogical career as instructor in English at Barnard, later assistant professor and still later dean of that college. She has held the latter post since 1911. She is the author of "Government Regulation of the Elizabethan Drama" (1908) and several monographs on social and political subjects. She is a member of the Women's University, Barnard, Cosmopolitan and Women's City clubs.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AT BARNARD COLLEGE

EDUCATIONAL work of women's colleges is no longer incidental but has entered upon a new and useful era. Barnard College, according to its dean, will play an important role in promoting broad ideas.

Women's determination to enter law, medicine, politics, journalism, &c., gives a new aspect to their higher education.

Latin is no longer prescribed at Barnard, but instead students have to acquire wide knowledge of classical history, thought and civilization.

By means of a flexible grouping of related subjects Barnard seeks to meet the problems of elective and prescribed studies.

Instructional work as a career for women is urged on Barnard graduates as one admirably suited to those seeking a life of usefulness to their generation.

Medicine, social work and politics and other fields tending to conserve or develop life are other openings popular with the present day girl graduate. This interest the dean of Barnard attributes to the war.

The idea that rules in choice of a life work is to achieve the most good for themselves and the community of which they are a part.

An international movement is under way for facilitating exchanges of students and instructors between women's colleges and universities of the Old and New Worlds. In this movement Barnard is proud to lead.

Oxford offers hospitality, and Dean Gildersleeve hopes that Columbia will soon open her law school to Barnard girls. These are the leading and latest hopes of this great college for women.